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**AFGHANISTAN**

## SUCCESS STORY

# Internship Program Strengthens Engineers

**USAID builds the capacity of Afghan engineers who build roads.**



Photo: USAID/IRP Mustafa Yasa

*Interns watch as Engineer Eshaq performs a California bearing ratio (CBR) crushing test, which measures the load-bearing capacity of materials used to build roads.*

*Intensive training and hands-on experience are contributing to the development of strong and technically capable transportation engineers. USAID's engineering internship program, along with other training programs, will help support the entire Afghan road network into the future.*

Building the capacity of Afghanistan's professionals is essential for Afghanistan's successful future. USAID is committed to providing both development assistance and educational programs that will allow Afghans to maintain and expand the development infrastructure in their country. In September 2009, USAID launched the sixth round of its engineering internship program with a new class of 21 interns.

A model for improving the skills of young Afghan professionals, the program began in November 2007 and has trained more than 100 local civil engineers. Interns have come from five Afghan universities including Kabul University and Nangarhar University. The paid internships allow students to complete their practical training prior to graduation.

Many professors recognize USAID's engineering internship program as a model for quality in Afghanistan. "This is one of the best programs in which trainee engineers gain knowledge while working on such big road projects with updated and approved standard specifications," said Eng. Idrees Noori, a program intern. The program is conducted according to the standards of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials and the American Society for Testing and Materials.

After completing his internship, Eng. Noori worked on the Kandahar-Hirat Road project. Subsequent to that project, Noori was offered a position with a USAID contractor as a deputy site construction manager and has been directly involved with the Kishim-Fayzabad road project for the past three years.

Four of the former interns in Noori's class are now working on a 20-km stretch of the Kishim-Fayzabad Road in Badakhshan province. Other interns have gone on to create their own businesses as entrepreneurs and engineering professionals. In Afghanistan, where degree holders are often forced to choose jobs in fields other than those in which they trained, this is a significant milestone.

The growth of the number of internships has created a fruitful partnership with Afghanistan's universities by providing job opportunities and building capacity skills relevant to the Afghan economy. "Thanks to the people of America for their moral and financial support for this tremendous program," said one of the program participants. "It is expanding innovation for Afghans."